

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 278542

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-03 HEW-02 DEAE-00 EB-07 COME-00

NSF-01 NSC-05 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01

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DRAFTED BY NEA/EGY:GGBROWN:PM
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O 192322Z DEC 74
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TPHY, EG

SUBJECT: STERLING DRUG VISIT

1. DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN INFORMED BY DR. TROUT, MEDICAL DIRECTOR, STERLING DRUG, THAT HE WILL BE GOING SHORTLY TO CAIRO TO ATTEND A SPECIAL MEETING CONCERNING A CONTROVERSIAL DRUG CALLED HYCANTHONE OR ETRENOL.

2. HYCANTHONE IS APPARENTLY BEING USED OR BEING CONSIDERED FOR USE BY THE EGYPTIANS FOR THE TREATMENT OF SCHISTOSOMIASIS.

3. STERLING U.S. IS NOT PRODUCING THE DRUG BUT ITS AFFILIATE IN ENGLAND PRODUCES IT. STERLING U.S. HAD WITHDRAWN ITS INVESTIGATIONAL NEW DRUG (IND) APPLICATION TO THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION FOR COMMERCIAL/ECONOMIC REASONS BECAUSE OF A VERY LIMITED U.S. MARKET, SO IT HAS NOT COME UP FOR FDA DETERMINATION.

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PAGE 02 STATE 278542

4. DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED UNSOLICITED CORRESPONDENCE FROM DR. ERNEST BUEDING, PROFESSOR OF PATHOBIOLOGY AND PHARMACOLOGY, JOHNS HOPKINS, AND SEVERAL OTHERS, WARNING AGAINST INDIRECT OR DIRECT USG INVOLVEMENT IN THE SUPPORT FOR THIS DRUG IN EGYPT DUE TO THE FACT THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE DRUG MAY BE CARCINOGENIC AND MUTAGENIC.

5. ACCORDING TO TROUT, THERE IS HIGH LEVEL EGYPTIAN INTEREST, INCLUDING PRESIDENT SADAT, IN THE DRUG.

6. WE THINK EMBASSY SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ABOUT THE DRUG IN SCIENTIFIC CIRCLES BUT SHOULD AVOID BEING DRAWN INTO THE MATTER. THE USG, I.E. FDA, HAS NO LEGAL BASIS AT THIS TIME UPON WHICH TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL DETERMINATION FOR THE U.S. WE BELIEVE EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES ARE QUITE AWARE OF VARIOUS SCIENTIFIC VIEWS ON HYCANTHONE.

7. GIVEN HIGH LEVEL EGYPTIAN INTEREST IN THIS MATTER, TROUT ADVISED TO CONTACT EMBASSY TO PROVIDE BACKGROUND ON HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE EGYPTIANS.

KISSINGER

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